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GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



THOMAS D. WATKINS, JR.
SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

MEMORANDUM

TO: Pupil Transportation Providers

FROM: Carol Wolenberg
Deputy Superintendent

DATE: August 12, 2004

SUBJECT: PA 231 of 2004

This memorandum provides important information about new legislation regarding red light bus stops. PA 231 of 2004 was enacted into law on July 21, 2004. Below is an outline of the major changes (by section number) to the Pupil Transportation Act that came about with the passage of that law.

- The legislation removes the reference to a “diameter” for tail lamps and signals (MCL 257.1815); indicates that all exterior lamps and signals on a school bus shall be in conformance with current USDOT, federal motor vehicle safety regulations (MCL 257.1815 and MCL 257.1817); and removes requirement for “sealed beam” lights (MCL 257.1817 and MCL 257.1819).
- MCL 257.1855 (2) (a) and (b). Both subsections deal with bus stops where pupils are required to cross the roadway. The language stated, “. . . stop the school bus as far to the right side of the roadway or private road as possible to provide for the safety of the pupils being boarded or discharged . . .” The language was changed to read, “. . . stop the school bus on the roadway or private road to provide for the safety of the pupils being boarded or discharged . . .” The following was added to both subsections: “The bus shall stop in the extreme right-hand lane when boarding or discharging pupils.” A school bus must not leave the roadway when performing a red light stop where pupils are required to cross the roadway.
- MCL 257.1855 (2) (c) and (d) added [(c) references school buses equipped with only alternately flashing overhead red lights, and (d) references school buses equipped with red and amber alternately flashing overhead lights]. Each sub-section allows for the driver of a school bus, when performing a red light stop where pupils are not required to cross the roadway, to “. . . stop the bus as far off the roadway or private road as practicable to provide for the safety of the pupils being boarded or discharged . . .”

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- MCL 257.1855 (e) [previously subsection (c)]. The law now allows for hazard light bus stops to be performed on roads with a lawful speed limit of **45 miles per hour or less** when the road has adequate width for the school bus to be pulled to the far right of the roadway or private road allowing traffic to flow and to provide for the safety of pupils being boarded or discharged. Previously, the lawful speed limit could not exceed 35 miles per hour.

To summarize the red light stop issue: Drivers who perform red light bus stops where pupils must cross the roadway must still position their buses on the roadway, in the extreme right lane.

However, if pupils are not required to cross the roadway, a driver may perform a red light stop by stopping the bus as far off of the roadway as practicable.

The entire PA 231 of 2004 is available.

- Go to www.michiganlegislature.org
- Under Legislative Bill Search, enter 5969 in the Bill Number box.

There are two views, both available in PDF and text versions:

- The Public Act as it appears now; and
- the final bill version, “As Passed by the Senate”, which would identify language stricken, changed, and inserted.

If you have any questions, please contact Sue Howell, Grants Coordination and School Support, Michigan Department of Education, at (517) 373-6388, or email her at howells@michigan.gov

cc: ISD Superintendents